



The Oasis

A Seasonal Newsletter of Prince William Forest Park

The Park's Northern Boundary - Route 234



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Route 234 Access Study

Beginning in 2004, the National Park Service (NPS) initiated a feasibility study to consider public access from the Route 234 corridor. This effort fulfills a recommendation in the 1999 General Management Plan (GMP) for Prince William Forest Park which proposed the exploration of this management action.

The planning effort began with identifying preliminary concepts for possible access locations. These include providing a parking lot for access to trail heads, a vehicular access and road, and a leave things as they are (no action) alternative. Other reasonable alternatives will also be considered.

Part of the study includes a visitor and community survey. In June, a visitor exit survey was conducted

over a seven day time- frame within the park. The second survey is currently scheduled to take place in October.

Additionally, a random mail survey was conducted within four local zip codes to approximately 3,400 households to gather community knowledge of the park. In early June a public meeting was held to present the preliminary concepts of the study to those interested.

Your ideas and comments on this are welcome. Please stop by the park visitor center to review the conceptual plans, or you may visit the website link to this study for more information at:
www.nps.gov/prwi/pphtml/news.html.

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Route 234 Improvements

Many people have been concerned about impacts to Prince William Forest Park along Route 234. We are too! The National Park Service (NPS) has been involved with the planning and design of widening Route 234 for over fifteen years in order to reduce impacts to the park.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) began the final two phases of widening Virginia Route 234 in 2004. When it is completed in 2007, Route 234 will be a four lane divided highway, with a Class I multi- use trail on the south side of the highway, along the park boundary.

The NPS conceded approximately nineteen acres of Prince William Forest Park land for the project. For this concession, VDOT provided the NPS with monetary compensation, which the NPS used to acquire a scenic easement on a 33- acre parcel of land located on Joplin Road. The scenic easement (a popular conservation tool for land owners) allows the owner of the property to continue to reside on the property and provides long- term protections for the park.

While the project advances, park staff members continue to monitor construction activities, impacts to the park, and attend monthly partner meetings sponsored by VDOT that address stakeholder concerns.



Construction associated with widening Route 234 along the park's northern boundary.

It's a Bird..it's a Plane..it's.....

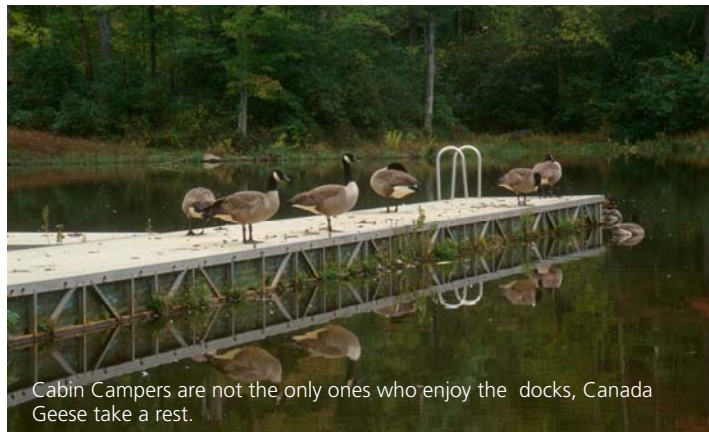
Prince William Forest Park is an oasis for birds as well as people. Because of its location and varying climate, the park provides excellent habitat for more than 100 species of birds. Although no threatened or endangered species have been observed nesting in the park, bald eagles are frequently seen soaring overhead, and eight species that are listed by the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage as rare animals have been identified within its boundaries. Six of these eight species are designated as Species of Concern. Interesting birds you may encounter in the park include the wild turkey, American crow, red- tailed hawk, Canada goose and the pileated woodpecker.



From left to right: Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey

Because Prince William Forest Park has remained a protected, contiguous land mass, it serves as an important pit- stop to neo- tropical migratory birds migrating up and down the east coast. Interested birders can observe these species, as well as the many resident species, while walking along the park's 37 miles of trails which meander through the diverse habitat of the park. Be sure to bring binoculars, to get a good look at the birds you hear.

Pick up your free bird checklist at the visitor center to record each species you encounter during your visit to the park.



Cabin Campers are not the only ones who enjoy the docks, Canada Geese take a rest.

Hey, What's That Nipping at My Nose?



Cross-country skier dressed for success

As the days get shorter and the nights get longer, colder weather is sure to follow. The best way to not get caught off guard and be properly prepared is by dressing appropriately when hiking and biking the many trails and fire roads at Prince William Forest Park. Remember that prolonged exposure to low temperatures, wind and/or moisture can result in cold-related injury from frostbite and hypothermia. Be sure to “Plan ahead and Prepare” by checking the weather forecast before your journey.

Wear several layers of loose-fitting clothing to insulate your body by trapping warm, dry air inside. Choosing synthetic materials and wool clothing is best at wicking away moisture and keeping you dry as wet clothing loses 90% of its insulating value. Because 75% of heat loss is through your head, wearing a hat is one of the best ways to fend off cold-related injuries. To protect your cheeks, ears, nose and extremities from frostbite wear well-fitting gloves and a scarf or balaclava. Eating a well-balanced diet and drinking warm, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free liquids helps to keep you hydrated and warm.

Watch for the first warning signs of frostbite—a tingling, then numb feeling with a pale, waxy-white skin color and the warning signs of hypothermia—uncontrollable shivering, cool bluish skin, a cool abdomen with low core body temperature, and a change in mental status. Get indoors as soon as possible and seek medical attention.

We want your experience at Prince William Forest Park to be a safe and pleasant one. We encourage you to utilize these tips and put a halt to these winter hazards.

Continuous Quality - Improvement in Action

This fall, Kirsten Leong, a PhD student at Cornell University, will be conducting interviews and collecting field notes as part of a “human dimensions of deer management research project.” The human dimension of wildlife management is “...how people value wildlife, how they want wildlife to be managed and how they affect or are affected by wildlife and wildlife management decisions” (Dr. Daniel Decker, Cornell University). The goal of this project is to help the National Park Service (NPS) improve its interactions with the public and respond to issues that arise relating to wildlife management. While this project will focus on one species, the white-tailed deer, the results can be applied to many wildlife species.

Ms. Leong will be at Prince William Forest Park for a few weeks beginning October 24, 2005. She will speak at a Friends of Prince William Forest Park meeting on November 13, 2005 about the project, and will be conducting informal interviews with county leaders and local citizens over this time period. These interviews will be used to develop a mail survey which will be sent to 1,000 randomly selected addresses in the communities surrounding the park between January and March of 2006.

If you would like more information about this project please contact Jennifer Lee, Chief, Resource Management, at jennifer_lee@nps.gov.



Watch for White-tailed deer early in the morning and around dusk.



Eastern National

Serving America's National Parks
and Other Public Trusts

If you need to shop for a nature or history lover on your holiday list, drop by the Eastern National Bookstore at Prince William Forest Park. The bookstore is located in the park's visitor center and has over 130 items for sale. The proceeds from the bookstore support education programs at Prince William Forest Park. All of the items for sale relate to

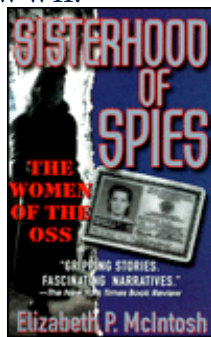
the history and natural splendor of our region.

Drop in and explore for yourself what the bookstore has to offer. From books to bird calls to

binoculars, there's something here for everyone.

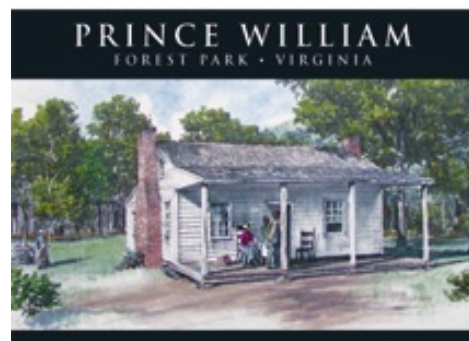
Learn more about the park you thought you knew.

One of our best selling titles, *Sisterhood of Spies* by Elizabeth McIntosh, details the stories of female spies that served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), forerunner to the CIA. Prince William Forest Park was a key training ground for the OSS during WWII.



Do you want to learn to identify the birds in your backyard or the trees in the forest? Why not purchase a field guide?

In collaboration with Prince William Forest Park, Eastern National has produced a new set of five post cards showing artist representations of homes once found in the park. The post cards are \$0.50 each.



Just one image of the 5-card series

Since 1947, Eastern National outlets across the country have donated over \$70 million to the National Park Service. Visit your local Eastern National Bookstore at Prince William Forest Park seven days a week from 9 am to 5 pm and make your holiday shopping count. The bookstore is located in the Prince William Forest Park visitor center, just ¼ mile from the park entrance.

Keeping them Wild!

Any walk into the woods could be a chance to meet up with a deer or skunk or even, as they move about, the American Black Bears (*Ursus americanus*). With the continuing disappearance of critical habitats, many animals, including the black bear, have to travel further and more often for food. Prince William County is no exception. Wildlife are looking for food and shelter further afield and Prince William Forest Park may provide needed habitat. While this provides us with spectacular opportunities, it means we have more responsibilities to help keep wild creatures and ourselves safe.

Here are a few things you can do to avoid a bad wildlife encounter in your yard or at your campsite:

- Do not leave any food outside, including pet food.
- Store garbage in sealed containers.
- Clean barbecue grills after each use.
- Periodically clean trash cans to eliminate odors.

If you come in contact with a black bear or other large mammal:

- Stay calm.
- Face the animal and slowly back away - do not make any sudden movements.
- Give the animal plenty of space to leave the area.
- Remember, climbing a tree or trying to run probably won't work. Even a bear can climb a tree and it's faster than you are.



Encounters with wildlife can be exhilarating, but there are some things you should know to make it safer for both you and the wildlife.



It's your land, lend a hand!

Volunteering is an American tradition that has made an immeasurable contribution to communities, organizations and individuals throughout the country. Today's volunteers are active, dynamic, creative individuals who possess the skills, desire, patience and time to accomplish a wide variety of tasks.

Volunteers- In- Parks are Very Important People (VIPs)! In 2005, over 250 volunteers donated approximately 14,000 hours to Prince William Forest Park in a wide range of projects, including trail and campsite rehabilitation during National Public Lands Day.

Volunteers come from all over the United States to help preserve and protect the park's natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations. Some service groups come for a few days, other volunteers stay for months. Some are students, others are retirees looking for adventure. Some maintain and/or patrol trails while others work as campground hosts or as visitor center personnel.

For more information, please call the visitor center at 703- 221- 7181. Operating hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, daily.

Extreme Makeover – Trail Edition

The asphalt surface at Pine Grove Forest Trail has undergone a major renovation. The park contracted to overlay the existing asphalt with a sustainable material called Rainbow Turf®. Consisting of a single layer of colored Rainbow Turf®, the material is combined with a special polyurethane adhesive which binds it together. Rainbow Turf® provides a comfortable, cushioned walk, easing stress on joints. The multi-colored trail blends in with the surrounding environment. In fact, it looks a lot like wood chips.



So, how is this trail now more environmentally friendly? Rainbow Turf® is made from discarded vehicle tires. That means there are fewer tires going to the landfill. Started in England as a way of dealing with more and more used tires, Rainbow Turf® was first used at Walt Disney World in Florida. Fredericksburg National Battlefield was the first National Park site in our area to use the material. Now we've adopted the idea and turned a heavily traveled trail into a more inviting, environmentally friendly, and safer trail. With the trail likely to last over 30-years, maintenance costs are nearly zero.



it is ideal for those with some mobility impairment, young children, or those looking for something a little less challenging.

Come check out the trail and put a spring back in your step!

During this "extreme makeover" phase, the trail was closed, but is now ready for you to explore. While the trail is not ADA compliant due to some steeper sections,



Riders up to the Chopawamsic Cycle Challenge

On September 11, 2005, over 70 volunteers, bicyclists and park staff joined forces to raise money for the park. The Friends of Prince William Forest Park challenged local cyclists to spend a day riding through the park on both its paved and gravel routes. Donations for the cycle challenge were received from each rider. The riders not only got to spend a challenging day in the park, but were automatically entered to win fantastic door prizes.

Through the generous contributions of several local sponsors including REI, Shirt, Inc., The Training Connection, Inc., Business Management Systems, Mary Washington Hospital, Olde Towne Bicycles, Dynamic Enterprise Solutions, Inc., The Young Marines, Woodbridge SDA Church, Fairfax Skin Care Center, Long & Foster Real Estate, and "N" Shape Fitness, everyone who took part was treated like a winner of the Tour De France. All cyclists were offered complimentary technical support for their bikes provided by Village Ski and Bikes.

"This year's Chopawamsic Cycle Challenge proved to be our biggest to date as we increased ridership and ultimately the funds that were raised," commented Kathy Wentworth Drahosz. "As a result, we are now able to increase the amount of resources that will be donated towards visitor's activities and historic preservation projects in the park."

The Friends of Prince William Forest Park was formed in 1989 to help preserve and enhance the park's natural and cultural resources, monitor activities that affect the park's ecosystem, and provide citizens a forum to discuss issues and decisions affecting the park. Meetings are held at the park on the second Sunday of the month and begin at 2:00 p.m. Along with a business meeting,

the day typically includes special speakers and/or organized recreational activities. Membership is open to anyone who supports the mission of the group. For more information, visit the Friends web site at www.fpwfp.org.



**2005
Park
Annual
Pass**

First annual photo contest a success!

Friends of Prince William Forest Park was pleased to announce the 2005 Prince William Forest Park Photography Show/Contest in early September. The winning photograph will be featured on the 2006 Prince William Forest Park Annual Pass along with the photographer's name.

First Prize: (1) 2006 Prince William Forest Park Annual Pass, (2) \$25 gift certificate for the Prince William Forest Park bookstore, (3) Your photograph framed with a 2006 Prince William Forest Park Annual Pass.

Second Prize: \$15 gift certificate for Prince William Forest Park bookstore.

Third Prize: \$10 gift certificate for Prince William Forest Park bookstore.

Winning photographs are on display in the park's visitor center until November 30th. Stop by to see the winners or check out the new pass in the next edition of The Oasis.

If you missed out on this year's contest? Don't worry. Snap away and be ready for the Second Annual Photo Contest! The 2007 pass will highlight the cultural and historic sites of the park.

Reader's Voice



Just getting to know Prince William Forest Park or are you a long time visitor? We'd like to hear from you. This area of the newsletter is for you to share your experiences of the park.

Or, if you have a comment you would like to share with the park, we are continually

looking for ways to better serve you. Is there a particular article you would be interested in reading? Do you have a comment or suggestion on a more general nature that you would like to share?

Please send your submissions to:

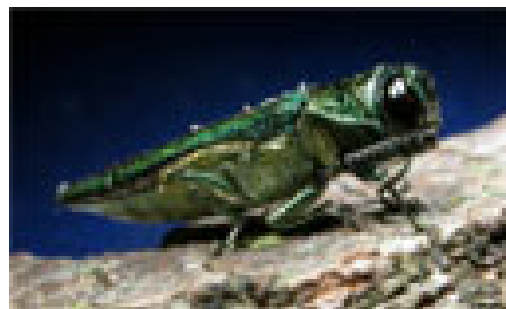
Prince William Forest Park
Reader's Voice
18100 Park Headquarters Road
Triangle, Virginia 22172

Or send it via e-mail to:
prwi_information@nps.gov
Please include "Reader's Voice" in the text of your message or subject line.



Alien Invaders: Beware!

The Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) and the Emerald Ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), both native to Asia, are threatening forested areas in the United States. These non- native beetles are transported from infected areas in firewood and nursery stock. Tunneling or feeding by the larvae girdles the trees resulting in mortality. Once an infestation is detected, the only way to treat an area is to remove infected trees and destroy them by burning or chipping.



Newly emerged Emerald Ash Borer:
David L. Cappaert, MSU

ecosystem. A tree being attacked by an Asian longhorned beetle will have round exit holes, 3/8" in diameter on the trunk and 1.5" in diameter on branches, sawdust accumulation, and oval/round pits in the bark. Signs of the Emerald ash borer include D- shaped holes on the trunk and branches, and extensive galleries underneath the bark.

The US Forest Service has designated parts of Illinois, New York and New Jersey as quarantined for the Asian longhorned beetle, and parts of Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio for the Emerald ash borer. You can help to protect the forest resources of Prince William Forest Park and your local community by not transporting wood from any of these quarantined areas. If you would like additional information about the beetles or the quarantine, please visit: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/eab/eabinfo/eabinfo.htm> for the Emerald ash borer or <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/alb/> for the Asian longhorned beetle.



Adult Asian Longhorned Beetle: USDA Forest Service

The Asian longhorned beetle attacks maple trees, but has also been identified in alders, birches, elms, poplars, and willows, while the Emerald ash borer prefers ash trees. These tree species are common in and around the park, so a release of either of the two beetles could be potentially devastating to the overall health of the forest

Wildland Fire Assessments in the local Community

The Student Conservation Association Fire Education Corps, in cooperation with Prince William Forest Park, is conducting assessments throughout the local community in order to rank the hazard to private homes in the event of a wildland fire. The assessments rate the type of vegetation within the forest, the topographic features of the area, and the types of home construction in the communities.

All information collected will be provided to the homeowners and the local fire department to better protect safety and property. Recommendations are included along with the assessment results, and include simple, low cost activities that can help protect homes.

If you live in a community that is located adjacent to Prince William Forest Park and would like to participate in this community program, please contact Jennifer Lee, Chief, Resource Management, at 703-221-3406. You do not need to be at home during this assessment; although, the assessment team would prefer to meet with you and discuss the factors of the survey, as well as give easy tips for making your home Firewise. The assessment should take no longer than 15 minutes.

For more information about this program please visit: www.firewise.org.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Prince William Forest Park
18100 Park Headquarters Road
Triangle, VA 22172



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Prince William Forest Park News
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or on the Web at: prwi_info@nps.gov

Got Questions? We've got answers. Your quick reference to information in Prince William Forest Park

General Park Information **703-221-7181**
Visitor Center - Open daily 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Camping **703-221-7181**
Including individual, group and backcountry.

Cabin Camps **703-221-5843**
*Including group cabins and individual rentals, please
leave a message.*

Travel Trailer Village **800-737-5730**
Camping area off Route 234 with full hook-ups.

Ranger-led Programs **703-221-7181**
*Including regularly scheduled, special request and
education programs.*

Volunteering in the Park **703-221-7181**
Learn how you can help.

Official Park Website **www.nps.gov/prwi**
For the latest information about the park, surf this way.